

Dignity Bill Gets Shot Down

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on the bill more quickly, and it was assigned to several committees there.

If a bill is not passed by one branch of Congress within 60 days after January 22, it is essentially killed.

Because this happened to the Dignity Act, it now can't be resubmitted again until 2003.

The bill faced opposition from anti-gay groups and conservatives, but it gained strong support and endorsements from the Florida PTA, Attorney General Bob Butterworth, Education Commissioner Charlie Crist, the Broward County Commission, the Florida Education Association, FloridaNOW, a number of NAACP chapters and others.

On February 18, over 100 gay and lesbian students from all over Florida gathered at the state capitol to show their support for the Act as part of the Equality of Florida Youth Lobby Day. The students were able to meet with 90 legislators out of 160 from both parties, and they participated in a press conference and luncheon.

The bill was raised at a time when the

Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network reports that 70 percent of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students report experiencing some kind of harassment in schools, and more than 90 percent of these students say that they hear anti-gay comments on a daily basis.

"It is truly a sad day in Tallahassee as the legislature effectively turned their backs on students being harassed," says De Palazzo, the co-chair of the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network of Greater Fort Lauderdale. "The solution should be for our policymakers at the state and local level to back school boards that demonstrate a commitment to ensuring that absolutely no student should experience bias, in this case [gay] youth who experience harassment and name-calling on a daily basis. Our next steps should come from the voices of our community members who request that local Broward County School Board members pass GLSEN's partnership agreement and keep all young people learning and living in a safe, respectful and dignified learning environment."

Manors Police Seek Suspect

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Miguel Santos.

Bigelsen says Santos is not a suspect in the crime and is cooperating in the investigation.

Santos had been out of country visiting family during the last several weeks and was "heartbroken" and "crushed" when told of the news by police. He returned back to Florida on Thursday evening.

On Friday, Busey's next of kin, a niece in Virginia, was located and notified of the death.

Neither the niece nor Santos had any ideas as to who could have committed the heinous crime.

Bigelsen says a few of the residents at the condo complex have given police their descriptions of a man who had been at Busey's apartment the weekend before the murder occurred. He could not give further details at this point in the investigation.

A team of detectives are now working on the case, and official autopsy reports have not yet been released.

Busey was last seen alive on Thursday or Friday of last week.

Anyone with information relative to the homicide is asked to call Wilton Manors Police Detective Danny James at 954.390.2150, or CrimeStoppers at 954.493.TIPS.



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